



## **News Release**

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### **Utah Departments of Health, Workforce Services Consolidate Medicaid Eligibility Workers**

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Beginning this week, Utahns applying for Medicaid programs will need only to interact with one state agency to determine their eligibility. In the past, both the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and the Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) employed Medicaid eligibility workers. But under a proposal presented by Governor Jon Huntsman Jr., and approved by the 2007 State Legislature, more than 250 UDOH eligibility workers were consolidated into the DWS.

“I’m confident the consolidation will be in the best interest of the citizens we serve,” said Dr. David Sundwall, UDOH Executive Director. “Those in need of the critical services provided by the Medicaid programs can now interact with a single eligibility worker in a one-stop service environment.”

In the past, UDOH would handle only Medicaid cases which were medical in nature. Other cases, which include services such as food stamps, financial assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program or child care, were handled by DWS. During fiscal year 2006, more than 20 percent of Medicaid cases transferred between the two departments, often creating confusion and frustration on the part of Medicaid clients. In that same year, more than 20,000 Medicaid cases received benefits from both departments.

“It is our goal, through this consolidation, to improve customer service and access while creating operational efficiencies,” said Kristen Cox, DWS Executive Director. “We remain committed to maintaining exemplary customer service in providing accountable, accurate and timely Medicaid eligibility determinations.”

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In January a joint UDOH/DWS planning team began communicating with stakeholders and planning for the consolidation. The planning team created a guiding principle to ensure a seamless transition for all Medicaid clients. Under the plan, UDOH retains its role as the agency responsible for Medicaid policy making. The plan also supports maintaining staffing of positions currently based in, and financially supported by, health care facilities and specialized long-term care facilities.

A list of Medicaid eligibility sites is available at <http://jobs.utah.gov/jsp/officesearch>.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*